Acute problem of potable drinking water in Saurashtra

3294. PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the whole of Saurashtra is facing an acute problem of potable drinking water for the third consecutive year;

(b) if so, what immediate steps are being taken in this regard; and

(c) what measures are being taken to solve the problem on a permanent basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): (a) As reported by the Government of Gujarat, Saurashtra Region of the State was under the grip of acute shortage of water for two consecutive years, i.e. 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. During the current monsoon, the State has been receiving satisfactory rainfall. The present storage in Saurashtra Reservoirs is 36% of the designed capacity and as the current monsoon is still on, it is expected that these reservoirs will be further replenished. However, reservoir supplying water to cities like Jamnagar and Rajkot, as on date, are not adequately replenished and need more inflow of water to sustain supplies to these up to next monsoon.

(b) and (c) As reported by the Government of Gujarat, the State Government has implemented a bulk water pipeline project for transfer of Mahi/ Narmada water from Central and South Gujarat to Saurashtra for meeting the needs of drinking water supply to the districts of Amreli, Bhavnagar, parts of Rajkot and Junagadh. Towns and cities in Saurashtra region have been supplied water during the scarcity period. Drinking water works relating to distribution network are going on in Bhavnagar and Amreli districts at a total cost of Rs. 450 crore. Government of Gujarat has also sanctioned a project at an estimated cost of Rs. 1106 crore for supplying Narmada water drawn from Maliya Branch to the districts of Jamnagar and Kachchh. The project is planned to be completed by December, 2002. These projects are part of the major drinking water supply projects based on the Sardar Sarovar Canal as source to cover 8215 villages and 195 towns of Saurashatra and Kachchh.